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SUBJECT: GOR PLANS FOR LONDON AND 2010 ENGAGEMENT WITH
AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: Acting Pol Minister Counselor Eric Green for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: While Moscow remains interested in bilateral and multilateral engagement to stabilize Afghanistan, the GOR's plans for the upcoming London Conference and 2010 offer no proposals for funding economic development work. We are seeing signs that Russia is attempting to work with regional partners such as the SCO, possibly to develop consensus on Afghanistan-related issues. Additionally, drug production in Afghanistan and trafficking through Central Asia remain a primary concern for Russia and offer the best possibility to encourage additional GOR efforts in Afghanistan. End Summary

Coordination with the Neighbors

¶2. (C) MFA officials told us that, prior to the January 28 London Conference, the GOR would participate in two regionally focused meetings on Afghanistan: the Istanbul regional meeting and the SCO Deputy Ministers' meeting in Moscow. According to Vitaly Rugalyov of the MFA's Afghan Desk, the GOR's position in London could be influenced by discussions at these meetings. He said that DFM Borodavkin planned to attend the Istanbul regional meeting as well as chair the SCO meeting. Rugalyov claimed that the GOR wanted to hear Afghanistan's perspective and that of its neighbors before finalizing its thoughts for the London meeting.

¶3. (C) Regarding the SCO meeting in Moscow January 24-25, Igor Arzhaev of the MFA's SCO Desk initially attempted to bill this as a routine meeting of SCO states who "happened to be traveling through Moscow on their way to London." They claimed that Deputy FMs of SCO member states (Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) were planning to gather to discuss Afghanistan, in addition to a slate of internal SCO issues. They confirmed that Afghanistan, immediate neighbors Iran, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan, as well as India, have been invited to the meeting as observers, but that the meeting was not open to broader participation. (Iran, Pakistan, and India, along with Mongolia, are official SCO observer states). MFA contacts told us the agenda would include discussion of the action plan from the March 2009 Moscow SCO Conference and coordination in advance of the London Conference. From other diplomatic sources in Moscow, we learned that Moscow in fact pushed for this meeting in order to have an opportunity to consult with SCO partners on their plans for London. While no formal SCO communique is expected from the Moscow meeting, it is likely that an informal group consensus will be formed on many issues. In contrast to what MFA officials previously said, currently the only agenda item for this meeting is

Afghanistan and the London Conference.

Preparations for London

¶4. (C) Rugalyov said that Moscow had a positive reaction to the "pillars" paper being circulated in preparation for the London Conference; however, there were some concerns about statements endorsing the ISAF agreement on transition. Moscow would also like more language establishing Afghanistan's neutrality and prohibiting interference from "foreign powers" on Afghanistan's sovereign territory. In spite of this, he noted that the GOR was eager to avoid a power vacuum in Afghanistan, especially after the U.S. "withdrawal" in 2011. Therefore, Russia was focused on increasing the capabilities of security forces within Afghanistan. Noting that Moscow generally supported reintegration of "rank and file" members, he commented that Moscow would like more clarity on plans for reintegration and reconciliation.

¶5. (C) While unable to provide any specific proposals Moscow might make in London, Rugalyov said that the GOR had a tentative offer to expand training at the Domodedovo Center and could make this proposal in London, via the NATO-Russia Council or at a different venue. He also noted that the Russian company "Vertical T" could increase their helicopter training programs in Afghanistan, on a commercial basis. He said that Russia remained "absolutely interested" in counternarcotics programs either bilaterally with the U.S. or

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in cooperation with other partners. Dismissing as "not realistic" any suggestion for Russia to conduct security forces training in Afghanistan, he maintained the official MFA line that Russia supports training in Central Asia or in Russia. In addition to the historical issues surrounding such a venture, he commented that China would have a difficult time seeing Russia "partnering" with ISAF in Afghanistan. Further, he speculated that Russian forces would not be comfortable with ISAF providing security for them.

2010: Yes to AK-47s and Police Training

¶6. (C) In framing Russia's plans for 2010, Rugalyov first recapped Moscow's assistance to Afghanistan, stating that between 2001 and 2009, the GOR provided 300 million USD worth of assistance to Afghanistan. This total included 70M USD in humanitarian assistance such as food, tents, Kamaz trucks and a 6.8M USD joint program with Germany to refurbish two medically equipped helicopters.

¶7. (C) While noting that the MOD had still not given an official response to the list of requested equipment donations passed to them in October 2009, he indicated that in the second half of 2010, Russia planned to provide 20,000 AK-47s to Afghanistan. He also stated that in 2010, Russia planned to continue humanitarian aid and food donations, such as wheat flour, via the World Food Program, although no specifics were available. He claimed that Moscow has no plans to provide in-kind equipment assistance such as trucks and fire engines because the GOR was currently working to replenish these items in their inventory.

¶8. (C) Rugalyov previewed a police training program he claimed was in the final stages of planning. He said that beginning in Summer or Fall 2010, the GOR would invite 225 Afghan police officers to a six-month study program in Russia. Based on their performance, potential for success, and Russian language abilities, some students would be selected for a 5-year training program at Russian universities. He said the MOI and MinFin were moving closer

to agreement on this program. (Note: It is likely that the initial six-month program would be at the Domodedovo Center. Rugalyov said that follow-on programs for those chosen to continue would be held in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Krasnodar. End Note)

But, No Funding for Economic Development

¶9. (C) Rugalyov also said that there were no plans in 2010 for Russia to fund economic development work such as the Salang Tunnel refurbishment or irrigation projects, but, that Moscow would be interested in such projects if donor financing were available. Noting that MinFin would have to allocate funds for any economic development work, Rugalyov said it would be incumbent on individual ministries to propose projects to MinFin and pursue financing. He remarked that a briefing on USAID procurement rules and regulations, planned for February 3 in Moscow, would be welcome by many Russian companies as a way to assist to Afghanistan.

Russo-Japanese Coordination?

¶10. (C) Rugalyov commented that FM Lavrov and Japanese FM Okada had discussed Afghanistan during Okada's recent trip to Moscow and that Russia and Japan had agreed to set up a bilateral working group to explore joint development projects in Afghanistan. He claimed that the GOJ was interested in learning from Russia's experience in Afghanistan. Japanese Embassy contacts in Moscow told us that PM Hatoyama was particularly interested in Afghanistan and had pledged 5 USD billion in assistance over five years. They added that Japan would consider funding joint projects with Russian companies, but that there was still discussion in Tokyo on whether such projects were the best way to proceed.

¶11. (C) Leonid Shevchuk, Principal Counselor in the MFA's Third Asia Department, shed light on what could possibly be holding Tokyo back from cooperation. He told us that Japan

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wanted to focus projects in the areas of education and culture, as well as socio-economic spheres. (Note: Generally, the GOR has been more interested in large infrastructure projects such as hydro-electric plant construction and refurbishment. End note)
Beyrle